

Friday, November 2nd, 2007

The Least Productive Congress Ever?: In the real world (that means outside of Washington, DC), productivity is measured by comparing the output received to the effort/cost expending to produce something or perform a task. Or, as the dictionary describes it, "rate of output per unit of input."

So far, the House of Representatives this year has taken over 1,000 separate votes, which has surpassed the most recorded votes ever in the history of Congress. We also have been "in session" voting for 146 days so far, which is also headed to a record number of days in Washington, DC. So, that's the input.

But what about the output? So far, only 107 bills have been signed into law. Over half of these were either naming something (like a post office) or extending an existing law that was scheduled to expire. Several more were simple land transfers from government to government. National Review has suggested that there has been only one piece of legislation of any significance that has passed and been signed into law which was the increase in the minimum wage. This Congress is on track to pass the fewest bills since electronic records have been kept. Furthermore, Congress has failed to send a single Appropriations (budget/spending) bill to the President after a full month into the fiscal year. This is the first time Congress has failed to do that since 1987.

So, arguably, this Congress has been the least productive Congress ever. After all, we have been in Washington the longest and voted the most while producing record low output. And they can't blame this on having a different party control Congress and the White House as that has been the case much of the time in the past.

By far the least effective Congress ever.....and I'm so proud to be a part of it.....not!

Taxpayer Choice Act: Last week I described the Democrat's latest "Mother of All Tax Increases" proposal. This was proposed by Charlie Rangel (D-NY) (who has been labeled Count Rangula in honor of the scary tax increases at Halloween time) and supported by Speaker Pelosi.

Well there is an alternative. An alternative offered by myself and Representatives Paul Ryan (R-WI), Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) and Michele Bachmann (R-MN). We call it the Taxpayer Choice Act.

Under this proposal, we completely repeal the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) for everyone. But, unlike the Rangel proposal, we do not take the tax increases from the AMT and spread them around. We don't have any tax increase. The AMT was put in place in 1969 to deal with a handful of very wealthy taxpayers who at that time were avoiding paying any tax at all. Now, nearly 40 years later, the AMT is a money machine for the government which Rangel and Pelosi want to keep churning out money for them to waste...I mean spend. The Taxpayer Choice Act taxes where they are now without the AMT, and it does not change the distribution of who pays taxes amongst any income bracket.

What it does is replace the AMT with an Optional Simplified Tax system which would be a simple 2-rate "flat" tax with no deductions. If you want to use the current tax system, that's your choice. Or you can choose to pay using the 10%-25% flat tax. It's up to you.

The four of us who have authored this bill wrote an article which recently appeared in the New York Post. Here is a link to that article which can give you more detail about our idea.

The Taxpayer Choice Act is a fresh, new proposal that is getting a lot of attention across the country. And it should. It would keep the government's hand from reaching deeper into anyone's pocket while offering simplification without compulsion.

I think you will hear lots more about this in months to come.

Until next week, I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell